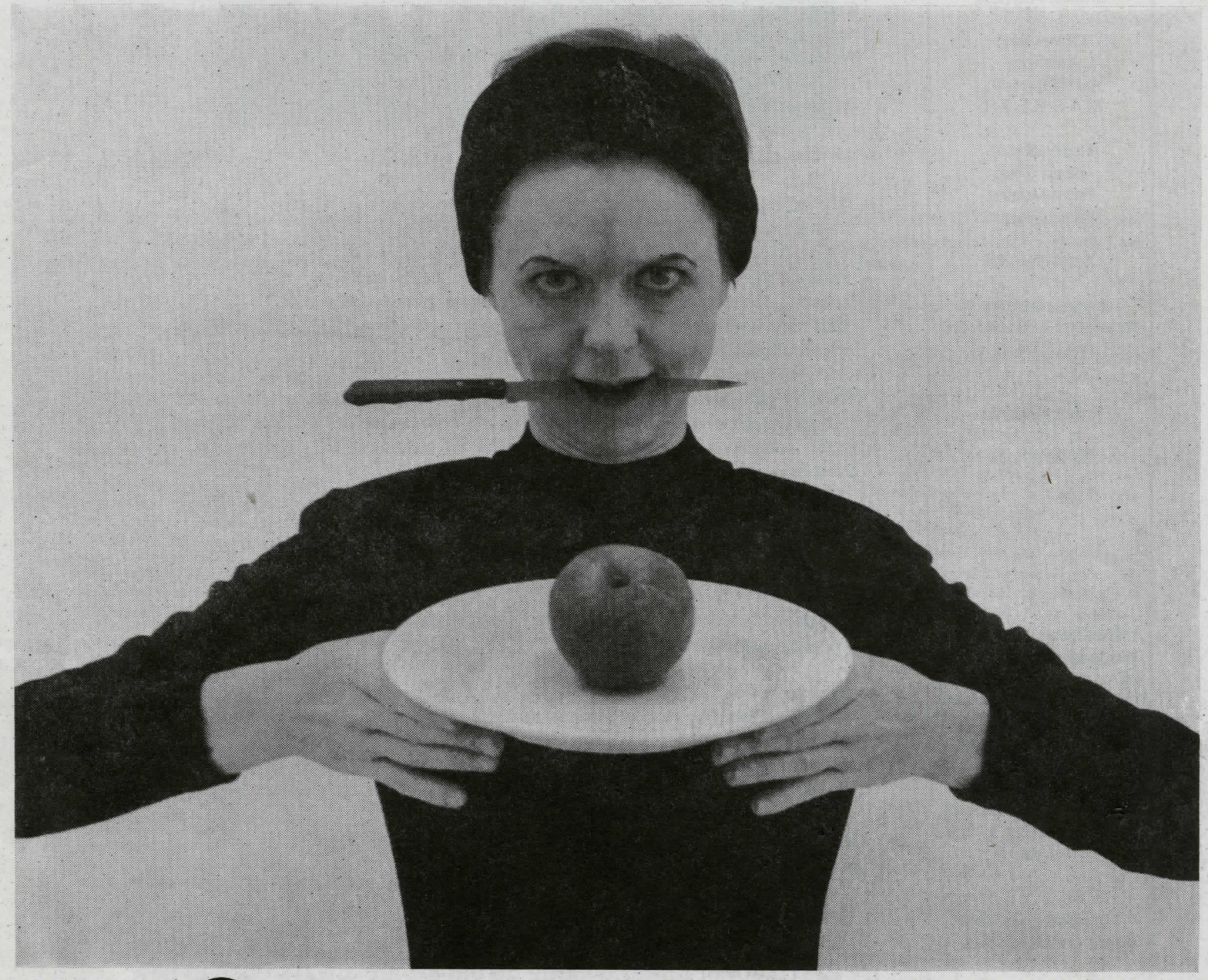
Permanent Review Committe on the

STATUS OF WOMEN

Faculty of Fine Arts

Issue 6 *Nov 1992*

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY



Cash Prize Contest Inside

The Permanent Review Committee on the Status of Women, Faculty of Fine Arts Newsletter Concordia University

Issue 6
Nov, 1992

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M.A.C.B.E.T.H.

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Special Thanks
to
Peter Whaite

This newsletter is a place for the voices of women in the Faculty of Fine Art, for their letters, their articles and their artwork. It serves as a forum for discussion, celebration and expression of ideas of and for women in fine arts.

We need your help and contributions.

THE PERMANENT REVIEW COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, FACULTY OF FINE ARTS

is looking for new members

This means you —
staff, part-time and full-time faculty, undergraduate and graduate students.

Concordia's Faculty of Fine Arts is the home of the university's first faculty based non- hierarchical Permanent Review Committee on the Status of Women, founded as a standing committee of Faculty Council in 1983.

We are a diverse group of undergraduate and graduate students, part-time and full-time faculty, and staff.
We meet every Thursday from noon to 1:30 p.m. at VA 243.

The main goal of this committee is to promote gender equity. Which means providing an active forum for hot topics close to our gendered hearts; fostering a gender-balanced curriculum in our faculty; ensuring that achievements in the fine arts are reflected in course content; and that affirmative action be in effect in hiring faculty and staff until women's concerns constitute an influence in proportion to the enrollment of women in our faculty.

We have published *Critical Paths*, an anthology of writing and artwork by faculty, staff and students; *The Girl's/Les Filles Handbook*, a booklet for students, staff and faculty addressing feminism and sexism within the institution; and a biannual *Newsletter.*

We have sponsored panel discussions such as *Beauty and the Beast: Art and Politics*, *Theory Invasion* and *Contesting the Spheres: Photography, Representation and Gender.*

We sponsor speakers, **support** exhibitions and **research** projects such as the problems surrounding daycare.

We are:
We are **representing women's concerns on the curriculum committee.**
We are **in liaison with the Women's Center and the How Do I Look Club, Communication Dept.**
We are **bringing Linda Mussmann's play M.A.C.B.E.T.H. to Concordia**
We are **currently writing a history of our committee.**
We are **in the process of organizing another critical publication.**
We are **publishing a biannual Newsletter.**

We need your input and participation!

We have a lot of things coming up but we are always open to new ideas.
We need your input and participation!

"Balls!" said the Queen. "If I had' em, I' d be King!"

M.A.C.B.E.T.H.

presented by Time & Space Limited will be coming in March, 1993 to Concordia University. M.A.C.B.E.T.H. has been adapted, designed and directed by Linda Mussmann, in collaboration with Claudia Bruce. Mussmann will also hold a round table discussion and a lecture in conjunction with the play to provide adequate background information before the performance.

What if Lady M. got to tell her side of the story? Well, not the story, but a story launched from Shakespeare's? The spirit of the queen, confined to a room furnished with a small butcher-block (fitting) table set for one, a dressing area with make-up table, and a sideboard laden with sound (and fury) equipment, moves around in this limbo-space talking mostly about her late husband, mourning and missing him. Assisted by VCR and projected film, various kinds of music, song, little made-up poems, and dance (all performed with remarkable virtuosity by Claudia Bruce, with Mussmann handling most of the electronics), she tells how she would have done things better if she had had--not balls, certainly, which she has hugely if only metaphorically--but opportunity.

Noami Conn Liebler, Shakespeare Bulletin, Spring 1991.

Ms. Mussmann delights in ambiguity. In her productions, ideas take form, only to explode and recrystallize. Her works do stump: they perplex. And they fit no convenient artistic category, for they combine texts by Ms. Mussmann with acting, chanting and rhythmic movement.

Phillip Shepherd, Theatrum, February/March 1992

Cameos

For a decade and a half, Linda Mussmann's Time & Space Limited has been making conceptual, Gertrude Stein–like performance pieces from an increasingly feminist perspective. ***M.A.C.B.E.T.H.*** is director/designer Mussmann's most impressive work yet, witty, menacing, visually elegant. Wrapped in black body suit and toque, Lady Macbeth is the sole character. Brilliantly played by Mussmann's longtime collaborator Claudia Bruce, she is slowly colored bloody before a white projection screen; performs behind it like a shadow puppet; quotes dear "Macky" (always putting things off until "tomorrow") in stand-up segments at a mike; and most chillingly, entertains an invisible Duncan at dinner table, a scene seen both live and in close-up on a TV monitor. This doubling lays an image of Lady Macbeth as demonic Tupperware hostess ("More meat, Duncan?") over the Shakespeare character already established before us. Mussmann and Bruce work the show with film, slides, overhead projector, and dense audio and musical score, visible signs of female authority in this excursus on female power. —**Ellnor Fuchs**

And it is changing attitudes that Linda Mussmann is after in her Time & Space Limited production of *M.A.C.B.E.T.H.*, presented at the Cunningham Dance Studio in New York's Westbeth last November. Mussmann, an experienced director who left the mainstream (if she was ever in it), is a brave woman: despite considerable need, she turned down a recent NEA grant because of its censorship clause. And she has created and directed a brave, brilliant version of *Macbeth* that challenges the prejudices of audiences.

Without didactic comment or analysis, Mussmann immerses us in homely images that become weapons, as the domestic realm shows itself for the battle site it is. Mussmann says she wants people to think—emotion, if it comes, can come later—and she has been accused of "coldness" (so was Brecht). But I found her production powerfully emotional; the poetry of her *M.A.C.B.E.T.H.* works under the surface, challenging what is below consciousness.

As Shakespeare hung his vision of experience on familiar old tales, Mussmann hangs hers on familiar old Shakespeare. She has truly, as Pound suggested, made it new. She is one of a growing group of women who, in claiming Shakespeare as their own, reclaim women's voice in the larger culture. Ms

Marilyn French, Ms., Volume I, Number Five.

Film Reviews:

Orlando, a film directed by Sally Potter, was recently screened at the Festival International du Nouveau Cinema 1992. Orlando was adapted from Virginia Woolf's novel also called Orlando which was published in 1928. Woolf based the novel on a fantasy of her lover, Vita Sackville-West. Sackville-West was a prominent novelist of the period who had sprung from the great English aristocratic tradition, something which is an anomaly in itself.

Orlando is the story of a journey of an English aristocrat who lives for four hundred years, first as a man and then as a woman. Born as a nobleman, Orlando is the favourite of Queen Elizabeth I and is granted both property and favours. After the Queen's death, he falls passionately in love with a visiting Russian ice princess on the frozen River Thames. She leaves him. He has a humbling experience with poetry and then takes up his duties as ambassador in Central Asia. In the midst of war, he is unwilling to kill or be killed and changes sexes. As a woman, Orlando returns to the salons of the 18th Century London where she must now face a choice to either marry or to loose everything as a woman may not hold property. She refuses to compromise herself. She then meets a man she can love. Through her own choices, she loses both inheritance and love. Orlando eventually emerges into the twentieth century as a strong woman.

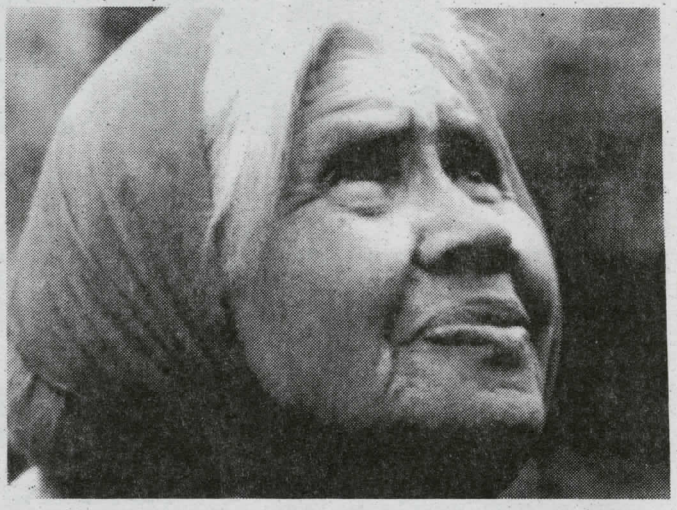
The striking use of irony is apparent throughout the film. The opening scene establishes the ironic tone with it's Peter Greenawayian costumes, landscape, and architecture. It is a mock up of The Draughtman's Contract 's, from the trees to the gaudy costumes. In this use of irony, Potter comments on Greenaway's misogynist films, contemporary and historical society as well as the entire genre of film. With irony well established, she continues its usage throughout the film. The film comments on the marginality assigned to women and raises questions about the discourse of resistance by switching from male hero to female heroine in the midst of the film. Used in this way irony becomes an effective tool. It implies

> "a progression from looking at structures as they affect the individual internally (ie. psychoanalytically) to looking at them as they affect the individual in society."
> E. Ann Kaplan. Women & Film. Both Sides of the Camera. p.10. 1979.

Irony is established as well with the main character, Orlando, which is played by Tilda Swinton. During the poignant moments, Orlando establishes personal contact with the audience by direct eye contact and a personal and almost secret response. In traditional film genres the viewer is led to identify with a male hero. In Orlando, she establishes a traditional male role to identify with and then plucks it away. The audience is then left no other choice but to identify with the woman as hero. Ironic!

S.Raynard/P.Mueller.

Biofilm:
Thriller (1979)
The Gold Diggers (1981)
The London Story (1981)
Tears, Laughter, Fear and Rage(1986)
I am an Ox, I am a Horse,
I am a Man, I am a Woman(1988)
Orlando (1992)



Bowl of Bone was shot over a period of 15 years, Jan-Marie Martell produced and directed the feature length documentary. It is a quixotic, celluloid vision quest which emerges as an astonishing encounter between two very different women. Combining magic realism, cinema verite and an evocative score, **Bowl of Bone** follows an expatriot American woman - disillusioned, naive, spiritually restless - who retreats into British Columbia's spectacular Fraser Canyon, encumbered by the Vietnam War, a dead high school sweetheart and an abortion, to film a documentary about a Salish native healer.

She meets, films, and is haphazardly guided by an unlikely trio: Annie, the elder and herbalist; Arthur, Annie's inscrutable "attache" (who looks a bit like William Burroughs); and the formidable unseen presence of Auntie Josephine. Annie, the healer, helps her by becoming ill herself; Auntie Josephine blesses her in absentia; Arthur sends her up a tree, and shows her his modest collection of pocket watches, in a film that challenges conventional narrative in a captivating way.

Biofilm:

Bowl of Bone, 1992
One of Many:Dr. Nhan, 1983
A Little While More Yet, 1976
Pretend You're Wearing a Barrel, 1978
Fabula, 1969.

Le Recit d'A,
a trace of an autobiography in a situation of erasure

by Petra Mueller

Of metaphors and traces.

I'm going to briefly outline the argument that we construct the situation of AIDS through metaphor and cliche and not through an objective and impartial reality. That in this context the notion that metaphor obscures the pure state of objective reality is of no use at all. Indeed less than useless because purity is paralyzed by the notions of corruption and contamination.
That speaking, the voice and the vernacular are caught in a powerful crosscheck of political and social control.

In the second part I'll be mapping out the metaphor of erasure and of trace in *Le Recit d'A.* The Tale of A. The tale of the author.

And in the third part that power resides in acts. In the act of tracing and erasure. Of silencing. And of speaking.

1

> *AIDS does not exist apart from the practices that conceptualize it, represent it, and respond to it. We know AIDS only in and through those practices. This assertion does not contest the existence of viruses, antibodies, infections, or transmission routes. Least of all does it contest the reality of illness, suffering, and death. What it does contest is the notion that there is an underlying reality of AIDS, upon which are constructed the representations, or the culture, or the politics of AIDS. If we recognize that AIDS exists only in and through these constructions, then hopefully we can also recognize the imperative to know them, analyze them, and wrest control of them.*
>
> *Douglas Crimp "AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism" October #43*

Some would like to believe that the world is composed of discrete and pure lumps (object-lumps, thought-lumps) and that interactions, relationships, crossovers and substitutions constitute a corruption or a pollution of a pure state. But AIDS is not a discrete object where the lack of definition is due to poor lighting. There is no better angle from which we could clearer illuminate it. No illuminating angle. No lump called AIDS.

The strategy of laying out conflicting beliefs is employed by Simon Watney in his essay "The Rhetoric of AIDS" where he sets out numerous quotes showing the diversity and range of the political and social beliefs that constitute the subject of AIDS. The conflicting relationships between the quotes and the readers position vis-a-vis the quotes constitutes Watney's text. The blank spaces in between the quotes rendered active. Active blank spaces. Senseless or not.
Paula Treichler uses a similar strategy and I'll be citing the quotes from her essay because they are vernacular metaphors. I want to be absolutely clear that in following pile of words are myths and cliches that you and I individually hold. That cliche and myth are not the property of an "Other". That ours is a social text condensed into metaphors. And that to vaguely know is different from to specifically hear.

1. an irreversible, untreatable, and invariably fatal infectious disease that threatens to wipe out the whole world.
2. a creation of the media, which has sensationalized a minor health problem for its own profit and pleasure.
3. a creation of the state to legitimize widespread invasion of people's lives and sexual practices.
4. a creation of biomedical scientists and the Centers for Disease Control to generate funding for their activities.
5. a gay plague, probably emanating from San Francisco
6. the crucible in which the field of immunology will be tested.
7. the most extraordinary medical chronicle of our times.
8. a condemnation to celibacy or death.
9. an Andromeda strain with the transmission efficiency of the common cold.
10. an imperialist plot to destroy the Third World
11. a fascist plot to destroy homosexuals.
12. a CIA plot to destroy subversives.
13. a capitalist plot to create new markets for pharmaceutical products.
14. a Soviet plot to destroy capitalists.
15. the result of experiments on the immunological system of men not likely to reproduce.
16. the result of genetic mutations caused by "mixed marriages."
17. the result of moral decay and a major force destroying the Boy Scouts.
18. a plague stored in King Tut's tomb and unleased when the Tut exhibit toured the US in 1976
19. the perfect emblem of twentieth-century decadence, of fin-de-siecle decadence., of postmodern decadence
20. a disease that turns fruits into vegetables
21. a disease introduced by aliens to weaken us before the takeover
22. nature's way of cleaning house.
23. America's Ideal Death Sentence.
24. an infectious agent that has suppressed our immunity from guilt.
25. a spiritual force that is creatively disrupting civilization.
26. a sign that the end of the world is at hand.
27. God's punishment of our weaknesses.
28. God's test of our strengths.
29. the price paid for the sixties.
30. the price paid for genetic inferiority and male aggression.
32. an absolutely unique disease for which there is no precedent.
33. just another venereal disease.
34. the most urgent and complex public health problem facing the world today.
35. a golden opportunity for science and medicine.
36. science fiction.
37. stranger than science fiction.
38. a terrible and expensive way to die.

Paula Treicher "AIDS, Homophobia and Biomedical discourse: an epidemic of signification" October #43

Metaphors are inherent in the beliefs of the medical profession and scientific community as well as the unwashed masses — active in literate technological language as well as in the vernacular.

> *Scientific and medical discourses have traditions through which the semantic epidemic as well as the biological one is controlled, and these may disguise contradiction and irrationality. .... Many of these traditions are illustrated in an article by John Langone in the Dec. 1985 general science journal Discover. In this lengthy review of research to date, entitled "AIDS: The Latest Scientific Facts," Langone suggests that the virus enters the bloodstream by way of the "vulnerable anus" and the "fragile urethra"; in contrast, the "rugged vagina" (built to be abused by such blunt instruments as penises and small babies) provides too tough a barrier for the AIDS virus to penetrate.. "Contrary to what you've heard," Langone concludes - and his conclusion echoes a fair amount of medical and scientific writing at the time - "AIDS isn't a threat to the vast majority of heterosexuals.... It is now - and is likely to remain - largely the fatal price one can pay for anal intercourse."*
>
> *Paula Treicher "AIDS, Homophobia and Biomedical discourse: an epidemic of signification" October #43*

There is not as much a difference between irrational myths and scientific facts as we would like to believe. That it is not the facts in and of themselves that constitutes AIDS but the manner in which facts are constructed and allowed. And that meanings are constructed and allowed. That in the above text is a built in phobia where in the economy of desire we are meant to pay for pleasure with disease. Where the notions of the contaminated and the pure wander hand in hand each a liability to the other.

In the beginning (the late 70's to early 80's) AIDS was represented mainly as representations of viruses and close-ups of lesions. The body purely as an object subject to pestilence.

A few years later (the mid eighties) the actual people with AIDS were finally represented —- represented as victim. Victim as expression of pestilence. The bodies backlit and hidden, socially dead, encapsulated in the "Other."

> *The relation between subjugation of the voice in favour of the visible has important consequences for understanding the zeal with which the medical profession took up photography.*
>
> *Roberta McGrath "Medical Police" from the Rhetoric of Aids in Blasted Allegories 1987*

'NO MORE PICTURES WITHOUT CONTEXT'
'STOP LOOKING AT US; START LISTENING TO US.'
Silence=Death "Act UP".
ACT UP posters 1990's

Le Recit d'A
SIDA
Two similar sounds.

SIDA
Le Recit d'A
(simply desire to speak)
When a simple desire becomes a political act.

> *The questioning of the self is frequently inspired by a personal crisis which acts as a catalyst: cancer (Andre Lorde, The Cancer Journals), crippling neurosis (Marie Cardinal, The words to say it), the death or departure of a lover (Kate Millet, Flying). Whereas ... neither women nor men are likely to explore or to reveal painful and intimate memories in their autobiographies, this is clearly not the case in feminist confessional literature, which explicitly seeks to disclose the most intimate and often traumatic details of the author's life and to elucidate their broader implications.*
>
> *'Confession' is personal history that seeks to communicate or express the essential nature, the truth, of the self.*
>
> *both quotes from Rita Felski "Beyond Feminist Aesthetics" Chapter three: "On confession. Autobiography: Problems of Definition." 1989*

Le Recit d'A is Esther's first video. Le Recit d'A The Tale of A. The tale of Andrew. The tale of AIDS. The tale of l'Autre — the Other. It is her autobiography yet it discloses just one detail. The detail of herself as the "Other". A minute detail secreted in the telling of a tale. The Tale of A. The tale of the author. It is a trace of an autobiography in a situation of erasure.

The main elements of Le Recit d'A.:

The poetry of Edmond Jabes, an Egyptian Jew, who wrote about the Holocaust and the erasure of a people, tracing traces in an existential desert and the infinity of the white space of the page. The white space of the page punctured by the finite, the written, trace of man. White, the traditional motif for death and rebirth.

The voice of Andrew, a gay American, who through anecdotes tells the tale his life as a person with AIDS (PWA). Esther went to visit him in San Francisco because he has lived for eight years after being diagnosed with AIDS. Surviving as a PWA for the past eight years when the medical profession in Quebec estimates death after two.
His is a vernacular trace of surviving. Anecdotes as a trace of the progression of an illness and that life continues after diagnosis. "Of those things kept quiet and never heard."

The body of an anonymous white male constitutes the blank space on which the beginning of the tale is traced. The white-on-white male body: the stand-in-body. His is a body unmarked by disease where the essential is invisible to the eye.

> *Subject to the gaze of the camera the body became the object of closest scrutiny, its surface continually examined*

for the signs of innate physical, mental and moral inferiority. From this science of corporeal semiotics there emerged new forms of knowledge about the individual and new ways of mapping depravity.

David Green "On Foucault: Disciplinary Power and Photography" Camerawork #32 1985

The problems of representing the female body — to whom, for what purpose and in what manner — have a long history. Esther was faced with the difficulty of representing her own body and she was terribly aware of the compounded nature of her situation. She uses the strategy employed by Yvonne Rainner in her film The Man Who Envied Women where the question of voyeurism is addressed through distance. In Rainner's film the woman is just at that peculiar distance where she is not visible on the screen.
At that particular distance from which only Esther's voice is visible.

Esther uses distance because she is vulnerable. Vulnerable to exploitation. She uses the technological distance of the brain scanner which portrays her as a synthetic "everyman" and the distance within the frame itself in the super 8 footage where she is a small and indistinct but "real" figure.

Full colour video brain scans. The technological image of the scanner reduces her image to one of an opaque medical code. A technological erasure of subjectivity where she is rendered as an absolute and aesthetic image indistinguishable from a video effect. Where the only trace of her identity is the small detail in the corner of the screen. Her name. Esther Valiquette. Identified and classified for those in the know. To the rest of us just a set of pretty visuals.

But she has a voice and she speaks. "When the caress goes away there stays an immense violence."

What is presented as evidence remains evidence, whether the observing eye qualifies itself as being subjective or objective. At the core of such a rationale dwells, untouched, the Cartesian division between subject and object that perpetuates a dualistic inside-versus-outside, mind-against-matter view of the world. Again, the emphasis is laid on the power of film to capture reality "out there" for us "in here." The moment of appropriation and of consumption is either simply ignored or carefully rendered invisible according to the rules of good and bad documentary.

Trinh T. Minh-ha "Documentary is/Not a Name" October #52

Sunrise on Death Valley. The super 8 cinema verite of her visit to Death Valley, the existential desert of Jabes. Her sincere record of an experience from "out there" to "us in here". Tracing and erasing as the "here and now" of the electronic cuts through super 8 memory.

3

Le Recit d'A uses the metaphors of trace and erasure to expose and address fear. Our fear of moral and bodily contamination, of physical elimination and of a social isolation so complete as to render us void. To address a situation which would render her void because she is a woman with AIDS.
To "speak those things that are kept silent and never heard."

Colonial discourse produces the colonnaded as a fixed reality which is once an "Other" and yet entirely knowable and visible. ... My reading of colonial discourse suggests that the point of intervention should shift from the identification of images as positive or negative, to an understanding of the processes of subjectification made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse.

Homi K Bhabha "The Other Question ..."

Whether the real is construed as seduced or comfortably neutral, pure or contaminated, the singular and isolated notions of good and of bad are fatal dead ends.

Every object in the world can pass from a closed, silent existence to an oral state, open to appropriation by society, for there is no law, whether natural or not which forbids talking about things.

Roland Barthes "Mythologies" 1957

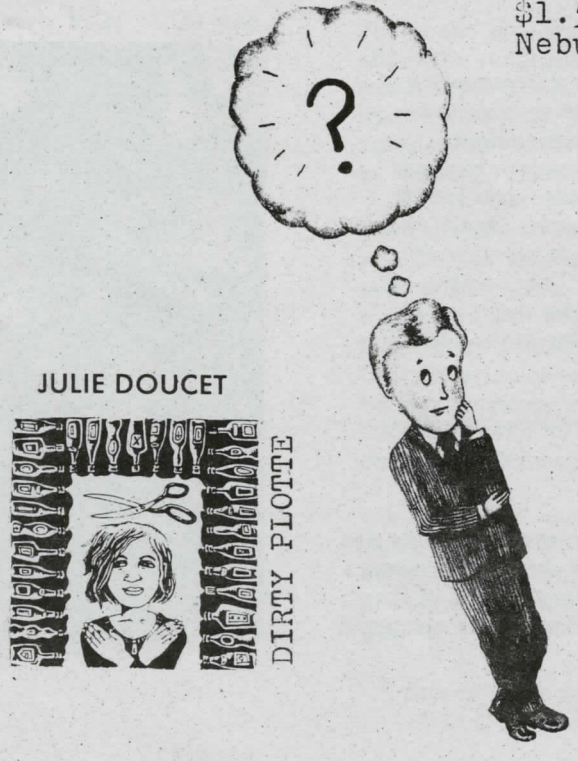
And therein lies the opening up of an "apparently dead end and fatal issue". Senseless or not.

The video *Le Recit d'A* by Esther Valiquette is one of three works from the Montreal section of the travelling exhibition *From Media to Metaphor: Art about AIDS* now on at the Musee d'Art Contemporain.

Originally Twisted Sisters was an underground comic book created by Aline Kominsky and Diane Noomin in 1976. Now there's this great compilation of women comic artists ranging, in age, from their mid 20's to mid 50's. It's expensive, $18.99, but brings together a lot of work that otherwise is difficult to get a hold of in comic book form. A great gift for your favourite girl.

Leanne Franson has some funny, digest-sized comics dealing with the sometimes confused and celebratory reality of her dyke life. It's available by mail for $1.50 or for $1.00 at Nebula.

"Julie Doucet raconte sa vie de fille menstruée, ses rêves même les plus cochons, en riant beaucoup d'elle-même et en se moquant énormément de sa génération de paumés, et de la vie en général. Elle fait cela avec des petits dessins plus cruels que jolis, qui rappellent parfois ceux des expressionnistes allemands du début du siècle, bourrés de détails du quotidien."
-La Presse



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DAUGHTER'S DADDY'S DESIRE

Basia Gilas

reflections on Sugar Daddy, a video by Ardele Lister

Aside from watching Ardele Lister's video, Sugar Daddy, part of the impetus behind the following paper stemmed from looking at Carolyn Steadman's Landscape for a Good Woman. In her book, which is part biography of her mother and part autobiography of herself, she tries to find a place for their stories in history and politics, in psychoanalysis and feminism. One aspect of the book looks at her father and examines what happens to theories of patriarchy when her autobiography deals with a working class father who isn't important in the world outside the household. What I was most interested by in "SugarDaddy" was the possibilities it had for examining a daughter/father relationship. A mother/daughter one would be equally as compelling. But, there seems to be a lot of work done on this particular topic. My discomfort with following this theme was that of the possibility of identification with the mother being rooted in some kind of essentialist notions of womanhood necessarily implying motherhood. Because I can almost be for certain that I identify with my mother no more than with my father, I chose to examine what that may ultimately mean. This particular aspect I was made to re-think again when I was reminded that the Symbolic order of things is not meant to explain 'real' life as much as it does the privilege that men have in it. Well, in that case does my father still have access to that privilege? No and yes. At the same time I want to argue that my father is not absorbed by cultural interpretations because he does not represent the outside world in that he's largely illiterate and because my mother is the head of the household', I argue that his indifference is symbolic of patriarchy that shapes women's lack of desire. What does this have to do with video? Well, probably not much, except that it was "Sugar Daddy" that made me look at this stuff more critically. I still argue that Lister's tape is not about video. I see it more as a kind of short story, where some of the visuals (family photos,super 8 film footage) replace words. The element of performance is something which would not translate as well into writing and necessitated the use of video. I think about the intent of the work or what Lister expected in terms of it's reading. My response is the kind I think this tape warrants. Ultimately for me it was a story. Narrative I think is something well suited to video as opposed to sculpture for instance. Because this tape is a typical of her other work, I think it was less about aesthetic conventions of video although they were used to make the tape somewhat intimate and 'honest' and the larger art discourse, then about dealing with personal history and her interdiegetic performance."

" Memory alone cannot resurrect past time, because it is memory itself that shapes it, long after historical time has passed."(Steedman, 1986,p.29)

It is Eva's stories that help to pull the obscure fragments together and make a new whole for Ardele's life. Was it the lack of love she saw pass between her parents that led her to construct her father's indifference and lack of desire? Or was it the love she saw pass between him and Eva that endeared him to her, that made her life passionate and full? Her love for Eva, a"good hearted, warm, funny" and somewhat lusty woman leads me to think that it was this, which her own mother lacked and made her wish Eva were her real mother. Eva's directness and passion could have left such an impact on Ardele, because she might have been the one adult close to her that was truly alive, full of desire.

"Patriarchy is grounded in the uprightness of the father. If he were devious and unreliable, he could not have the power to legislate. The law is supposed to be just that is, impartial,indifferent, free from desire." (Gallop,1982,p.75)

Her own father's apparent lack of desire for much of anything does not seem to be a manifestation of a conscious or unconscious attempt to maintain power through indifference. Instead his appearance of desiring nothing emerges as did the grandmother's in Brand's 'Photograph'. Her poverty was shameful. To want anything was to admit that she had nothing. Yet she buried 'goodies' in her bottom wardrobe drawer."as (they) all settled with her into a depressive hungry silence."(Brand,1988,p.63) For her father,desire for anything was cause for embarrassment.

The stories she tells about her father reveal a profound repression of what exactly she's not sure. She calls it desire or pleasure and doesn't only mean it in a sexual sense.. The Lord is thy shepherd, thou shall not want.. She doesn't know how deeply Catholicism was ingrained in her father but she does know that at Christmas time he never opens his presents. With coaxing he might lift the wrapping paper up from one end and peak in the box. This ritual fraught with awkwardness remains mysterious. Far from Germany and work camps, in time and space and status, is it this profound experience which makes him feel not worthy of gifts? She imagines that there was a time for him where he could not entertain thoughts of what he wanted for he could barely get what he needed. He rarely speaks. When friends or family visit, he remains silent most of the time while the others passionately argue some point in polish. Her father has no opinon about what to eat, he wants nothing. He'll have what's made. And he has a reoccurring dream, one that reoccurs as often as his nightmares about Germany and bombs and his face and his friend. This Christmas he again dreamed of buying a van and driving across Canada. Of course he'll never do it. Her mother and father share laughter over the absurdity of doing such a thing. They laugh with embarrassment and with having absorbed the idea that old

lives are worthless and undeserving and to want things purely for themselves is cause for shame. She never understood when her father would tell her to be quiet when her and her brother would play the lion and the hunter game or when she would sing or whistle She's not sure she understands it now either. But thinks it has something to do with maintaining a flat affect in their house. This then becomes an attempt to exert control and power over the family. A power he could not exert in the outside world. Largely illiterate in both his mother tongue and english, he is a working class body. After retiring he continues to work for people he got to know through word of mouth. He is an excellent carpenter. It is her and her mother who draw up his invoices. They raise the price of his labour costs, because her father is too humble. He'd rather charge less and avoid a confrontation with his customer, then charge what his work is actually worth. He also doesn't want to appear greedy or needy. But at the same time he'll respond to some 'rich lady's' call to change her light bulbs or hang her paintings. He'll take any opportunity to make money and laugh smugly at the ineptness. It was just before this last Christmas that her father was building a bookcase for some other 'rich people'. The table saw cut his fingers enough for him to be temporarily disabled. His fingers bound up on one hand made operating nail clippers impossible. He asked his daughter to do it for him, to help him. She was taken aback by how sexy a prospect that became and refused. This sexual tension followed perhaps the most overt recognition of her own sexuality on his part. While visiting her parents, she spent a night somewhere else. The following day her father wouldn't sit with her on the couch, like he always did. And for the past two years, ever since she moved out on her own, her kisses goodbye were met with a cringe. She's reminded of a story her mother once told her: that of her father, at a point in their lives, before she was born, wanting to leave her for a youngerwoman. What her mother's story tells her is that there laid an explicit case for her father desiring something. She wonders if it was after this episode that an emotionally flat household was enforced? Where any expression of pleasure in the house was stifled for it may cause him to long for the pleasure that mystery woman represented. Despite her own existence she still can't believe her parents did what required her conception. As far backas she can remember, their bedroom door was always open. Aside from the mandatory peck on the mouth before her father went off to work, she saw no affection pass between them. And she still knows nothing about her parents relationship, other than her mother feels guilty for criticising her father for never having anything nice to say, since he works so hard and provides so well for them all. A relationship based on guilt and obligation and the power of her father's hurtful words. She knows, with hope and desire, that it couldn't always have been like this. Something happened.

. Ardele's father, the owner of a fur shop, was his own boss.His first seduction of Eva was through his body but mediated by a symbol of his power. He offered her a job in his shop and for fun held up a fur cost for her to try on. As he closed the coat he put his arms around her.

The woman who wanted her father, who made her father want to leave her mother and three brothers: did she want a house built for her as her father built for many others or did she want his body?

"By giving up their bodies, men gain power the power to theorize, to represent themselves, to exchange women, to reproduce themselves and make their offspring with their name. All these activities ignore bodily pleasure in pursuit of representation,reproduction, production. In this 'phallocratic' power, man is no without loss: notably in regard to the enjoyment of his body. The theory of the sexual function (ultimately the reproductive function) and questions of pleasure are excluded, because they have no place in the economy of production.(Gallop,1982,p.67)

For Ardele to find out about her father's desire not from her mother, but from her father's mistress is an incredible discovery.To further become Eva is evocative. *"The seduction which the daughter desires would give her contact with the father as masculine sexed body. The seduction which the father of psychoanalysis exercises refuses her his body, his penis, and asks her to embrace his law, his indifference, his phallic uprightness."(Gallop,1982,p.75)*

The divulgence of Eva informed Ardele that her father did infact possess sexual desire, and quite passionately. And not only that but love. At eight years old Ardele, asked her father why he didn't marry Eva instead of her mother. "The uncomplicated child must have seen the simple, uncomplicated love pass between them that (she) never saw between (her) parents. In retrospect she knows she hit the nail on the head with that question.

Ardele's personification of her father's mistress reveals,albeit not explicitly, a possible desire for her father in

the classic Oedipal sense. This dynamic could also be extended to represent her relationships with other men. In becoming Eva and sharing her disillusionment with her relationships with men, Ardele explores or questions her own similar inclinations. Perhaps it was Eva's courage to confront herself and be open and proud of herself,despite her 'jaded' history, that Ardele admired. And in loving her as a mother perhaps reveals the lack of openness in her relationship with her own mother.

And she comes to the conclusion that it is those who confront their desires and disillusionment and share it with us who are important. To resist this confrontation is understandable. Theunderlying tensions in her own household ring of the fear of it. Constant repression makes something die. If she could become her mother, would she understand why for the past ten years she's been collecting pretty nightgowns and bedjackets, folded and never once worn in her dresser drawers, anticipating illness or her deathbed. Would her father's behaviour reveal an emotional control over her mother and the rest of them. His unkind words would she understand more clearly first hand if she understood Polish instead of in translation from her mother. Was it her father's shame to want things that made her mother shameful too. Would her mother still feel the need to justify the things she bought for herself by insinuating they'd go to her daughter when she was gone. Would shel ook for her daughter's approval of the things she buys, thereby absolving herself of her own desire. After all it was her daughter she bought their V.C.R. their den furniture, and her new camel haircoat for. This shame in desire was it shared by her parents or was her father's power more discrete then she ever wanted to admit.

"No one allowed them to be anything to each other.
Everything was to be completely understood by everyone.
Nothing was to be hidden because there was nothing to hide.
Everyone knew the necessity for keeping secrets."
(Seaman,1989,p.11)

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OK. The name of this newsletter is boring. Help think of a new one. The chosen entry will be the one used here after. The choice will be made by vote in one of this committee's meetings. Leave your entry in the status of women's mailbox, 2nd floor V.A. Building in the photocopy room kitty corner (sort of) to Cafe X. Make sure you leave your name and phone number on it.

What do you call a newsletter desparately seeking readership?

Use the following letters to come up with your winning entry.

T P R C O T S O W F O F A

Answer: _____

Deadline: February 14th, l993.
Valentines Day!

Linda Mussmann at the dimmmer board